

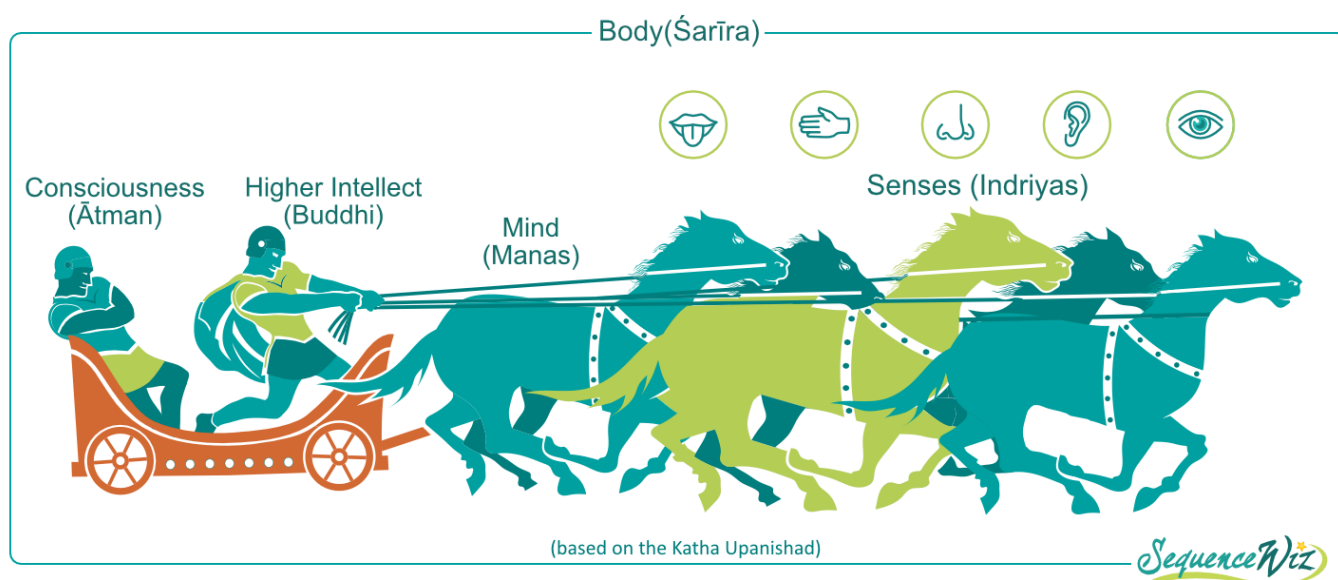
## BODY AS A CHARIOT:

The traditional view of the relationship between the senses, mind and intellect.

A traditional image from the Katha Upanishad depicts the body as a chariot.

"Know the self as a rider in a chariot,  
and the body, as simply the chariot.  
Know the intellect as the charioteer,  
and the mind, as simply the reins.  
The senses, they say, are the horses,  
and sense objects are the paths around them....  
When a man lacks understanding,  
and his mind is never controlled;  
His senses do not obey him,  
as bad horses, a charioteer."

--\*Upanisads\*, trans. Patrick Olivelle (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 238-239.



In this material world the human body (the chariot) is pulled around by the five senses (the horses), reacting to what we see, hear, taste, smell and touch. The mind (reins) is impulsive by nature, and is easily distracted by the likes, dislikes and emotional responses to sense objects (different roads, paths). It gets pulled in conflicting directions unless the charioteer (higher intellect) takes the reins and takes charge. The passenger is the Self, the center of consciousness, which is always the neutral witness.

This image is significant on many levels. It poses important questions like:

- Who is driving your chariot?
- How aligned are your senses, your mind, your higher intellect and your inner Self?
- Where are you going and who gets to decide?

It tells us that we need to find a goal, direction that is consistent and satisfying to our senses, mind and intelligence. In the text itself that goal is Krishna, which means commitment and dedication to the Higher Power.